



كلية التربية

كلية معتمدة من الهيئة القومية لضمان جودة التعليم  
إدارة: البحوث والنشر العلمي ( المجلة العلمية )

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# **Reading Comprehension Skills and their Relationship to Reading Anxiety in English among Primary School Pupils in Kuwait**

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**Abstract**

The current research aimed to identify the level of reading comprehension skills in English among primary school pupils in Kuwait and its relationship to reading anxiety in English. The researcher prepared the Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English Language and the Reading Anxiety Scale in English to achieve the research objectives. The two research tools were applied to a sample of (93) female pupils in the fifth grade in the primary stage. The research concluded that: There is an average level of reading comprehension skills in English among primary school pupils so that the "T" value was (15.45), which is a statistically significant value at the significance level (0.01), and there is an above-average level of reading anxiety in English language among the research sample so that the "T" value was (24.48), which is a statistically significant value at the significance level (0.01), and there is a statistically significant negative correlation at the significance level (0.01) between the scores of the research sample on the reading comprehension skills test in English language and their scores on reading anxiety scale in English language so the correlation coefficient value was (-0.427).

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension Skills, Reading Anxiety, Primary School Pupils.

## ملخص:

هدف البحث الحالي الى التعرف على مستوى مهارات الفهم القرائي في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية بدولة الكويت وعلاقتها بقلق القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية، ولتحقيق اهداف البحث قامت الباحثة بإعداد اختبار لمهارات الفهم القرائي في اللغة الإنجليزية ومقياس لقلق القراءة في اللغة الإنجليزية، وتم تطبيق اداتي البحث على عينة قوامها (٩٣) تلميذة بالصف الخامس بالمرحلة الابتدائية وتوصل البحث الى: وجود مستوى متوسط من مهارات الفهم القرائي في اللغة الإنجليزية لدى تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية عينة البحث حيث بلغت قيمة "ت" (١٥.٤٥) وهي قيمة دالة احصائياً عند مستوى (٠.٠١)، وجود مستوى فوق المتوسط من قلق القراءة في اللغة الانجليزية لدى التلاميذ عينة البحث حيث بلغت قيمة "ت" (٢٤.٤٨) وهي قيمة دالة احصائياً عند مستوى (٠.٠١)، وجود علاقة ارتباطية سالبة دالة احصائياً عند مستوى دلالة (٠.٠١) بين درجات التلاميذ عينة البحث على اختبار مهارات الفهم القرائي في اللغة الإنجليزية وبين درجاتهم على مقياس قلق القراءة في اللغة الانجليزية حيث بلغت قيمة معامل الارتباط (-٠.٤٢٧).

**كلمات مفتاحية:** مهارات الفهم القرائي، قلق القراءة، تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية.

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## Introduction

Reading is an indispensable skill. It enriches a person's experiences, broadens his horizons and perceptions, connects him with the past, helps him understand his present, and predicts and plans for the future. It provides him with others' experiences on how to face obstacles and solve problems to achieve his goals. It is a necessary skill that must be learned, and reading won't play its role unless the student understands what he is reading. Understanding the read text is the ability to extract the information contained as closely as possible.

The purpose of teaching reading is comprehension. Reading that does not lead to comprehension and is not linked to understanding what is read, is incomplete. Rather, we cannot call it reading upon modern education for its concept. Understanding is the cornerstone of reading. Reading whether silent or aloud can't result from comprehension in its limited meaning restricted to the read text and in its comprehensive meaning which means benefiting from previous experiences and knowledge. Reading isn't a mechanical process based on mere recognition and pronunciation of letters but rather a complex intellectual process that leads to understanding (Nahaba, 2013).

Al-Qahtani (2018) pointed out that reading comprehension is the primary goal of reading, including mental processes, such as analysis, conclusion, criticism, and judgment, requiring the reader's ability to invest the reading material according to certain steps and stages. In the same context, the importance of reading comprehension lies in improving the learner's language, providing him with rich ideas and useful information and objectively acquiring critical skills.

According to the educational literature, Kim, Linan-Thompson, and Misquitta (2012) explained that reading comprehension consists of several levels namely: (1) the first level includes **reading what is in lines**, which is the basis of understanding, meaning the verbal understanding of words and structures, (2) the second level includes **reading between lines**, searching for evidence, making judgments and interpreting the results and (3) the third level includes **reading beyond lines** and deducing generalizations that the writer doesn't include. On the other hand, Snow (2002, 12) classified them into three different levels namely: (1) **the word level** includes determining the word meaning, understanding the relationship between two words, and the ability to classify words, and (2) **the sentence level** includes identifying the sentence, understanding its connotations, criticizing what it contains, realizing the correct relationships between two sentences, and the ability to classify sentences and (3) **the paragraph level** includes placing an appropriate title for the paragraph, realizing, and evaluating the main ideas of the paragraph, and understanding the implicit ideas between the lines. Flood (1984, 191-192) also identified three reading comprehension levels which are **literal, deductive, and evaluative**.

On the other hand, Bakheet (2016, 142) and El-Kahlout (2010, 43-45) agree on the following levels: (1) **literal**: at this level, students read and understand exactly what is on the page. Comprehension involves surface meanings, (2) **critical**: at this level, students can differentiate between facts and opinion, recognize persuasive statements and judge the accuracy of the given information in the text and (3) **inferential**: This level is linked to reading what is beyond the printed lines and going further as to exceed the limits of knowledge.

Suryanto's study (2017) indicated that students' reading comprehension problems are caused by cultural issues, and fears of learning and teaching English. The study also indicated that social factors might be one of the reasons that lead to students' reading comprehension problems in English.

In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) or a second language (SL), students' psychological factors may contribute to language acquisition. Young (1992) mentioned some psychological factors affecting language learning, including motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. In the field of anxiety, specifically referred to as language anxiety, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) defined it as "anxiety and a negative emotional reaction that arises when learning or using a second language." Negative emotions can hinder the language learning process. Moreover, Aina's and Wijayati's (2019) study indicated that language anxiety as part of academic stress might cause students to become anxious while learning the target language.

In particular, when understanding new ideas by reading the text, the reader often finds it difficult to concentrate while reading the text confusing him to understand its content. The state of anxiety and tension when reading a text is called reading anxiety. Reading anxiety is a specific aspect of general anxiety that occurs during the reading process (Zbornik & Wallbrown, 1991). Reading anxiety occurs when students feel restless and confused during reading activities, resulting in decreased cognitive performance. Consequently, they will face reading difficulties, lower their self-confidence, and finally have less self-efficacy (Li, 2022).

### **The Study Problem**

English is the second language after Arabic in terms of usage, circulation and practice. It is a global language due to its urgent necessity in our time. The interest in acquiring it is increasing more in the advanced stages to keep pace with the scientific and technological progress that has been developed. Students should have been encouraged and motivated to learn it.

Reading comprehension is one of the most important concepts linked to the view of the nature and concept of reading. Thus, it is a linguistic, educational and pedagogical requirement. Doubtless, the goal of reading is understanding because reading without understanding isn't reading in its correct sense. It is a complex process that proceeds at different levels and requires various mental abilities and a lot of training, requiring us to define the concept of reading comprehension, its importance, foundations, principles, processes, levels, skills, and the most important factors affecting it and how to improve the level of reading comprehension (Ismail, Munib, & Ali, 2021).

Numerous previous studies have confirmed poor reading comprehension skills and advanced skills at the Bloom level. The results of Ibrahim's study (2007) confirmed the inability of many students to link, perceive, balance, comprehend, organize and analyze the texts presented to them. Al-Ghamdi's study (2011) confirmed students' poor reading comprehension skills and that the traditional method is one of the factors causing this weakness.

Several studies have dealt with reading comprehension in English as a second language among students at different educational stages, including (Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017), (Khorsheed & Rassoul, 2018), (Ganie & Rangkuti, 2019), (Niazifar & Shakibaei, 2019), (Miñoza & Montero, 2019), (Stranovska & Gadusova, 2020), (Stranovská, Ficzer & Gadusova, 2020), and (Liman Kaban & Karadeniz, 2021).

One of the affective factors which play an important role in learning a second or foreign language is anxiety. According to Brown (2007), anxiety plays a major affective role among the affective factors in second or foreign language acquisition. It is the most powerful predictor of the student's performance among the affective factors (Liu & Huang, 2011).

Therefore, foreign language reading anxiety refers to the feeling of worry and apprehension when students try to read and comprehend foreign language texts (Muhlis, 2017). Jalongo and Hirsh (2010) defined reading anxiety as a specific, situational phobia toward the act of reading that has physical and cognitive reactions. They further said that the physical reactions to anxiety include the release of adrenaline (“fight or flight reaction”) and physical symptoms, such as sweating, feeling shaky or faint, a pounding heart, rapid breathing, “butterflies” in the stomach, a tension headache, a stomachache, or even throwing up. Cognitive reactions to anxiety include an overwhelming sense of dread, low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, and expectations of public humiliation.

Recognizing reading anxiety and its sources would allow teachers to adopt supportive approaches to deal with the issue. Saito, Garza, and Horwitz (1999) suggested two options: (a) help students cope with anxiety-producing situations and (b) make the learning context less stressful. First, teachers should be aware of reading difficulties and teach students reading strategies they can use to overcome those difficulties. A common phenomenon among less experienced readers is that they try to understand everything they read and end up translating word by word but still can't decipher the message of the passage. Reading strategies instruction can help learners become better readers. Second, to help readers become better at reading, teachers should enhance learners' lower-level reading skills, such as word recognition and semantic parsing. Only with successful and efficient lower-level processing, cognition resources can be allocated to higher-level processing of the passage meaning.

Several studies have dealt with reading anxiety in English as a second language among learners at different educational stages, including (Saito et al., 1999), (Zoghi & Alivandivafa, 2013), (Baghaei et al., 2014), (Aisyah, 2017), (Piccolo et al., 2020), (Ghaith, 2020), (Gok, Bozoglan, & Bozoglan, 2021), (Annisaurohmah, 2022), and (Mawaddah, 2022).

Some studies showed that there wasn't a statistically significant correlation between anxiety and reading comprehension among learners (Brantmeier, 2000; Naghdeh, Naghadeh, Kasraey, Maghdour, Kasraie, & Naghadeh, 2014; Aeen & Sadighi, 2017). However; some other studies showed a negative, statistically significant correlation between anxiety and reading comprehension among learners (Wu, 2011; Jafarigozar & Behrooznia, 2012; Chow, Mo, & Dong, 2021; Wijayati, Mardianti, & Murtadho, 2021).

Based on the aforementioned, it is clear that there is a discrepancy between the results of previous studies on the relationship between reading anxiety and reading comprehension among learners. It is also noted that most previous studies were conducted on samples at university but few ones were conducted on samples at other educational stages. Furthermore, there is no Arabic study - to the researcher's knowledge - that dealt with the relationship between reading comprehension skills and reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils. Thus, the current research problem is determined in an attempt to reveal the level of reading comprehension skills in English and its relationship to reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils. Consequently, the current study problem attempts to answer the following main question:

**What is the level of reading comprehension skills and their relationship to reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils in Kuwait?**

**This question has the following questions:**

- 1) What is the level of reading comprehension skills in English for primary school pupils in the study sample?
- 2) What is the level of reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils in the study sample?
- 3) What is the correlation between reading comprehension skills and reading anxiety in English among the study sample pupils?

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## The Study Objectives

- 1) Identifying the level of reading comprehension skills in English for primary school pupils in Kuwait.
- 2) Identifying the level of reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils in Kuwait.
- 3) Measuring the correlation between reading comprehension skills and reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils in Kuwait.

## The Study Significance

- 1) The importance of the current study is due to examining the relationship of two variables having an impact on academic performance, success and excellence in English namely: reading comprehension skills and reading anxiety in English.
- 2) The practical importance of this study is for program developers to take advantage of reading anxiety as one of the reasons behind the low level of reading comprehension in English, which can be reduced to improve reading comprehension skills in English, reflected positively on improving the achievement level of students in English.
- 3) Enriching the Arab library with new research that either provides it with new results or confirms the results of previous research.

## The Study Terminology

### Reading Comprehension :

Al-Qahtani (2018) defined reading comprehension as “a process of constructing meaning. Understanding a text is a complex task that depends on the different thinking processes of the reader. Moreover, the reader’s rich life background and specialized knowledge of the subject plays a crucial role in reading comprehension.” Martin-Chang and Gould (2008) defined it as “the process of thinking and forming the required meaning, before, during and after reading by linking the information provided by the author

and the knowledge background of the reader.” The researcher defines reading comprehension procedurally as: “The perception of fifth-grade pupils (the research sample) of the meanings of letters, words and vocabulary of the reading comprehension passage (prepared by the researcher) and their content, and this perception is measured by the scores they get by their answers to the paragraphs of the test (reading comprehension) in English, which was prepared by the researcher for the current research.”

### **Reading Anxiety in English :**

Al-Noursi (2013) defined reading anxiety in English as the students' perceptions and recognition of learning English in general, whether by acceptance or rejection. The researcher defines it as conscious reading in which the student uses his previous experiences and context signals, to interact with the reading material by interpreting and predicting the text, identifying its ideas, and making objective judgments about the text. Reading comprehension is inferred from answering comprehension questions in the reading comprehension test, which includes the following levels: 1) literal understanding level: includes addressing the details in the text, mentioning the sequence of events, highlighting the relationship between the motive and the result, identifying synonyms and antonyms in the text, determining the overall idea of the text, 2) **inferential** understanding level: includes summarizing the main points and important events from the text, predicting the results and developing hypotheses, determining the meanings from the context of the sentence, and inferring the general idea of the text. 3) Critical understanding level: includes distinguishing between fact and fiction, evaluating writing based on personal opinion, distinguishing between opinion and reality, and evaluating motives and actions in the reading text (Mariotti, Homan, & Shearer, 2005).

## The Study Limits

The study limits are as follows:

- **Spatial limits:** This study was applied in Al-Farwaniyah Governorate in Kuwait.
- **Human limits:** This study was applied to fifth-grade pupils in the primary stage at Salma Bint Umays Primary School.
- **Temporal limits:** The study was applied in the second semester of the academic year (2021/ 2022).

## The Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all primary school pupils in Al-Farwaniyah Governorate in Kuwait from 2021 to 2022 and the pilot sample members amounted to (30) female pupils in the fifth grade of the primary stage. The study was applied to a simple random sample of (93) female pupils at Al-Andalus Primary School of the total population.

## The Study Methodology

The study followed the descriptive correlational approach in answering the study questions as being the most appropriate scientific method to identify the relationship between the study variables in the field.

## The Study Instruments

To achieve the study's objective of identifying the level of reading comprehension skills and their relationship to reading anxiety in English for primary school pupils, the researcher prepared the Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English and the Reading Anxiety Scale in English.

## Reading Comprehension Test:

### ❖ Preparing a list of reading comprehension skills for fifth-grade pupils:

In preparing the list, the researcher relied on the opinions of English language teachers, previous studies and literature review related to the study subject. The list consisted of (23) sub-skills, distributed into three main skills: (**Literal Reading Comprehension, Inferential Reading Comprehension, and Critical Reading Comprehension**). Some sub-skills emerged from it as follows: Literal comprehension (includes 7 sub-skills), inferential comprehension (includes 10 sub-skills), and critical comprehension (includes 6 sub-skills). The list was presented to a group of (11) arbitrators and the percentage of agreement on the skills included in the list, was (greater than 85%).

### ❖ Preparing reading comprehension skills test:

- **The Objective of the Test:** Measuring the fifth-grade pupils' level of acquisition of reading comprehension skills .
- **The Test Type:** Multiple Choice Questions.
- **Test questions formulation:** the questions are symbolized by the sequential numbers (1-30), and the alternatives (A, B, C). In formulating test questions, consideration was given to the suitable linguistic formulation of the test items to the level of the fifth-grade pupils, the equal difficulty of the alternatives, the absence of overlap between them, the random distribution of correct answers, and the absence of any hints for the correct answer, the comprehensive questions of the four levels of reading comprehension, and the varying difficulty of the questions.

Table 1. Table of specification

Question No.	levels of reading comprehension skills			Test items	Test marks	Percentage
	literal	critical	inferential			
1	3 items			3	3	10.0%
2	3 items			3	3	10.0%
3	3 items			3	3	10.0%
4		5 items		5	5	16.7%
5		3 items		3	3	10.0%
6		8 items		8	8	26.7%
7			3 items	3	3	10.0%
8			2 items	2	2	6.6%
Total	9	16	5	30	30	100.0%
	30%	53.3%	16.7%	100%		

The test's internal consistency was verified. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated between the scale items scores and the skills scores after deleting the item score from the skill score to which the item belongs. The correlation coefficient values for "literal understanding" skill items ranged from (0.418 to 0.527), for "inferential understanding" skill items from (0.509 to 0.629), and for "critical understanding" skill items from (0.469 to 0.710). The correlation coefficient values between skills and each other ranged from (0.428 to 0.619), and the correlation coefficient values between skills and the test total score ranged from (0.526 to 0.653), showing the achieved internal consistency of the test.

- **The Test Items' Difficulty Coefficients' and Discrimination Coefficients' Calculation:** The difficulty and discrimination coefficients for the test questions were calculated using the equation of calculating the discrimination coefficient and the equation of calculating the difficulty coefficient. The difficulty coefficient values for the test questions ranged between (0.167-0.833), while the discrimination

coefficient values ranged between (0.417-0.625). Accordingly, these questions are of varying difficulty. In preparing them, it was taken into account that some are for the underachievers, the majority is for the average and above average female pupil in achievement, and some for high achievers, to take into account the individual differences between female pupils.

To verify the test reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used. The reliability coefficient values for reading comprehension skills (literal comprehension skill, inferential comprehension skill, critical understanding skill) were (0.751, 0.774, and 0.810) respectively, and for the scale as a whole (0.849). It is noted that all the reliability coefficient values were acceptable (greater than 0.7), indicating the test reliability.

- **Test Correction:** The test was corrected by giving one point for the correct answer and zero for the incorrect answer, then the scores are combined to give the total score for the pupil's answer to the test, and the test scores range from (1 to 30).

### **Reading Anxiety Scale in English:**

The researcher used the reading anxiety scale in English for primary school pupils prepared by (ÇELİKTÜRK & YAMAÇ, 2015). The scale consists of (29) items corrected according to the five-point Likert scale (always = 5, often = 4, sometimes = 3, rarely = 2, never = 1). The researcher translated the scale into Arabic, and the scale was presented to (11) specialized arbitrators of faculty staff in Kuwaiti universities from various disciplines in curricula and teaching methods, measurement and evaluation, in addition to teachers and supervisors of English at the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. They were asked to express their observations and opinions related to the appropriateness of the dimension items, their suitability and clarity, and the soundness of their linguistic formulation, and

to take what they consider appropriate for adding, deleting or modifying. The criterion for maintaining the items was to obtain approval of (80%) or more, which is considered appropriate to judge the scale validity so that the scale in its final form consists of (29) items.

The scale developer verified the validity and reliability of the scale by applying it to a sample of (410) pupils in the fourth and fifth grades of primary school. The construct validity was verified using exploratory factor analysis. The items were loaded on one factor that explained the percentage of the variance of (42.02%). The scale reliability was verified using Cronbach Alpha Formula so that the reliability coefficient value was (0.950). The construct validity was also verified using the confirmatory factor analysis, and the results indicated that there is a conformity of the model with the sample data on which the scale is applied ( $\chi^2/df = 2.25$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.076$ ,  $SRMR = 0,055$ ,  $CFI = 0.97$ ,  $NFI = 0.95$ ).

In the current study, the scale's internal consistency was verified. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated between the scale items' scores and the total score on the scale after deleting the item's score from the scale's score. The correlation coefficient values for the scale items ranged from (0.437 to 0.659), and all the correlation coefficient values were greater than (0.3) and were statistically significant at the significance level (0.01) thus it is clear that the scale internal consistency was achieved.

To verify the scale's reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the Spearman-Brown split-half Formula were used. The reliability coefficient value of the scale was (0.826) using Cronbach Alpha Formula, and it was (0.819) using the Spearman-Brown split-half Formula. It is noted that all the reliability coefficient values were acceptable (greater than 0.7), indicating scale reliability.

## Statistical Methods

To analyze the current study results, the IBM SPSS V.26 program was used and the following statistical methods were relied on: Means and Standard Deviations, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to calculate the study tools' reliability, and the Spearman-Brown Formula to calculate the reliability by the split-half method.

## Results:

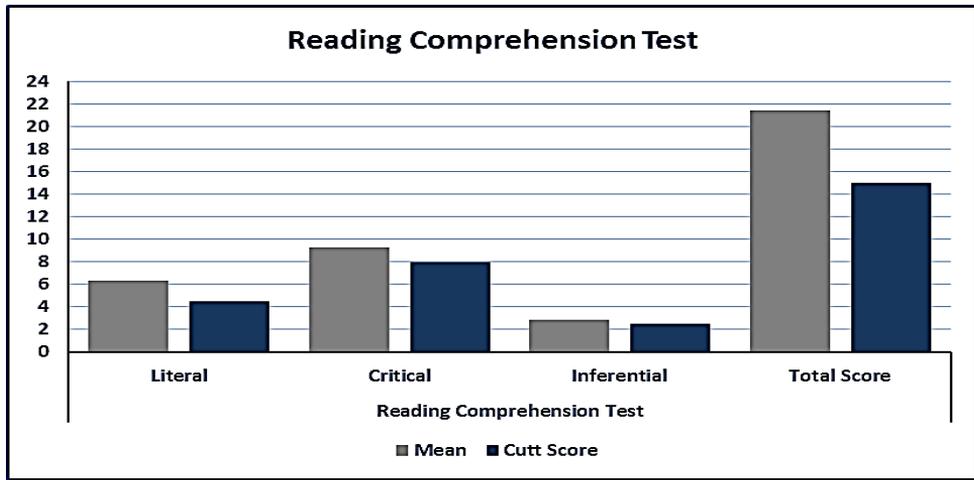
### First - The First Question Results:

1. **The first question states, "What is the level of reading comprehension skills in English for primary school pupils in the study sample?"**

**To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated, and One-sample T-test was used as shown in the following table:**

**Table 1. One-sample T-test results to reveal the level of reading comprehension skills in English for primary school pupils in the study sample**

Reading Comprehension Test in English		Pupils the study sample (N= 93)		Cut-off score	df	t- value	$\alpha$
		Mean	Std. Dev.				
1	Literal Comprehension	6.35	1.09	4.5	92	16.11	0.01
2	Critical Comprehension	9.27	1.71	8.0	92	7.06	0.01
3	Inferential Comprehension	2.81	0.63	2.5	92	4.64	0.01
Total score		21.43	2.95	15.0	92	92	0.01



**Figure 1. The mean scores of the study sample pupils on Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English**

It is clear from the previous table that the mean value of the scores of the study sample pupils was (21.43) with a standard deviation of (2.95), the t- value was (15.45) with degrees of freedom of (92), and the t- value was statistically significant at the level of significance (0.01), meaning that the study sample pupils have an above-average level of reading comprehension skills in English because the difference between the mean scores of the study sample pupils and cut-off score on reading comprehension skills test in English =  $21.43 - 15 = 6.43$  scores.

It is also clear from the previous table that the mean values of the scores of the study sample pupils on the dimensions of reading comprehension skills test in English (literal comprehension, critical comprehension, inferential comprehension) were (6.35, 9.27, 2.81), respectively, with standard deviations of (1.09, 1.71, 0.63), respectively, the t- values were (16.11, 7.06, 4.64), respectively, with degrees of freedom of (92), and all “t” values were statistically significant at the level of significance (0.01), meaning that the study sample pupils have an average level of reading comprehension skills in English (literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, critical comprehension).

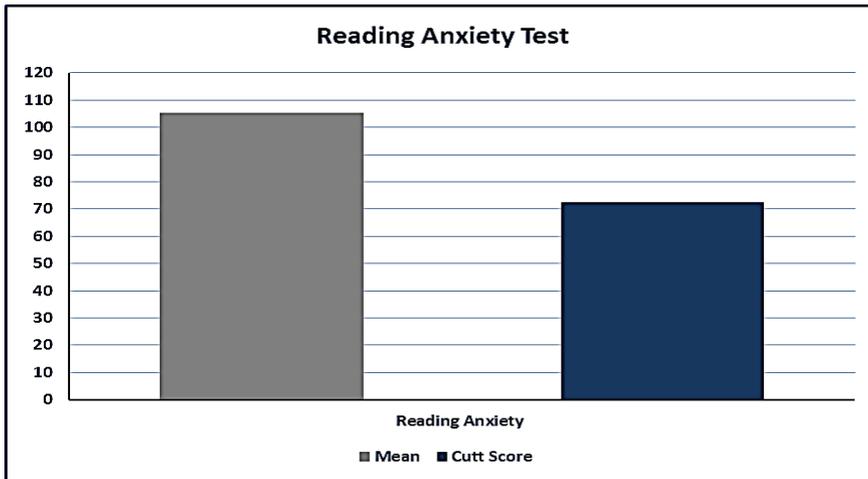
**Second - The Second Question Results:**

2. The second question states, "What is the level of reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils in the study sample?"

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated, and One-sample T-test was used as shown in the following table:

**Table 2. One-sample T-test results to reveal the level of reading anxiety in English among primary school pupils in the study sample**

Reading Anxiety Scale in English	Pupils the study sample (N= 93)		Cut-off score	df	t- value	$\alpha$
	Mean	Std. Dev.				
Total score	105.27	12.63	72.5	92	24.48	0.01



## Figure 2. The mean scores of the study sample pupils on Reading Anxiety Scale in English

It is also clear from the previous table that the mean value of the scores of the study sample pupils was (105.27) with a standard deviation of (12.63), the t- value was (24.48) with degrees of freedom of (92), and the t-value was statistically significant at the level of significance (0.01), meaning that the study sample pupils have a high level of reading anxiety in English because the difference between the mean scores of the study sample pupils and cut-off score on reading anxiety scale in English =  $105.27 - 12.63 = 32.77$  scores.

### Third - The Third Question Results:

3. **The Third question states,** "What is the correlation between the scores of the study sample pupils on Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English and their scores on Reading Anxiety Scale in English?"

**To answer this question, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of the study sample pupils on the Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English and their scores on the Reading Anxiety Scale in English as shown in the following table:**

**Table 3. Pearson's correlation coefficient between the scores of the study sample pupils on the Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English and their scores on the Reading Anxiety Scale in English**

	Reading Comprehension Test in English	Reading Anxiety Scale in English		$\alpha$
		correlation coefficient	correlation direction	
1	Literal Comprehension	0.241-	Negative	0.01
2	Critical Comprehension	0.358-	Negative	0.01
3	Inferential Comprehension	0.317-	Negative	0.01
	Total score	0.427-	Negative	0.01

### It is evident from the previous table that:

- There is a statistically significant negative correlation at the level of significance (0.01) between the scores of the study sample pupils on the **Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English** and their scores on the **Reading Anxiety Scale in English**, so the correlation coefficient value is (-0.427), meaning that reading comprehension skills in English are negatively affected by reading anxiety in English. The higher the scores of the study sample pupils on the **Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English**, the lower their scores on the **Reading Anxiety Scale in English**.
- There is a statistically significant negative correlation at the level of significance (0.01) between the scores of the study sample pupils on the **Reading Anxiety Scale in English** and their scores on the dimensions of the **Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English** (literal comprehension, critical comprehension, inferential comprehension). The values of the correlation coefficients are (-0.241, -0.358, -0.317), respectively, and all of these values are negative and statistically significant at the level (0.01).

### Discussion

The study results showed an average level of reading comprehension skills in English among the study sample of primary school pupils. The t-value was (15.45) which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.01) and this result is consistent with some studies' results (Ganie & Rangkuti, 2019; Khorsheed & Rassoul, 2018; Miñoza & Montero, 2019; Niazifar & Shakibaei, 2019; Stranovska & Gadusova, 2020; Stranovská, Ficzere & Gadusova, 2020).

The study results also showed a high level of reading anxiety in English among the study sample pupils. The t-value was (24.48), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.01) and this result is

consistent with some studies' results (Aisyah, 2017; Baghaei et al., 2014; Bozoglan, 2021; Ghaith, 2020; Piccolo et al., 2020; Gok, Bozoglan, & Mawaddah, 2022).

The study results also showed a statistically significant negative correlation at the level of significance (0.01) between the scores of the study sample pupils on the **Reading Comprehension Skills Test in English** and their scores on the **Reading Anxiety Scale in English**, so the correlation coefficient value is (-0.427). This result is consistent with the findings of some studies (Chow, Mo, & Dong, 2021; Jafarigohar & Behrooznia, 2012; Wijayati, Mardianti, & Murtadho, 2021; Wu, 2011).

All in all, the results confirm a negative correlation between reading anxiety in English and the different dimensions of reading comprehension skills in English among the study sample of primary school pupils. Therefore, we must invest these results in what brings the pupils many positives in reading comprehension skills by reducing reading anxiety in English.

In general, based on the result obtained about reading anxiety in English, the current study showed an above-average level of pupils' reading anxiety. In the same context, Muhlis (2017) have shown that the level of reading anxiety among students is average and this result differs from the result of the current study. This finding means that pupils feel anxious when reading activities in class. More recently, Al Faruq's study (2019) was also consistent with the results of the current study which showed that pupils feel nervous when they participate in a reading activity.

Guimba & Alico (2015) reported that when students find it difficult to identify main ideas, reading anxiety can occur. In particular, students may feel uncomfortable when their reading skills are insufficient. The potential factor beyond reading anxiety is class anxiety. When a teacher calls students

to translate a text from English into Arabic, it makes them anxious. To translate their first language into the target language and vice versa, students must have sufficient knowledge of vocabulary because the linguistic aspect of English as a target language is completely different from Arabic. However, if students do not have enough experience, they will get confused and end up misinterpreting the text.

### **Research Recommendations and Suggestions**

- Holding training courses to attract teachers' attention to employing pupils' reading comprehension skills in English in the teaching process.
- Classroom teachers use good reading comprehension skills in English that their pupils possess positively in classroom and extracurricular tasks.
- Building educational programs related to the development and strengthening of reading comprehension skills in English for students in the basic education stage.
- Raising the level of cultural awareness of the importance and objectives of learning English for primary school pupils.
- English language teachers should be aware of their important role in reducing pupils' English reading anxiety in the classroom.

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